

Inspection of a good school: St Thomas' Leesfield CofE Primary School

Thomas Street, Lees, Oldham, Lancashire OL4 5AT

Inspection dates:

8 and 9 February 2023

Outcome

St Thomas' Leesfield CofE Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils in this welcoming school feel well cared for and happy. They said that their teachers are kind and help them to do their best. Pupils' positive relationships with their teachers help them to feel safe. If bullying happens, leaders deal with it swiftly and effectively.

Leaders have set high standards for how pupils, and children in the early years, should behave. Leaders call these their 'always expectations'. Every pupil has an 'always badge' that they wear when they are meeting these high standards. Pupils wear these badges with pride.

Pupils have positive attitudes to their learning. This helps them to meet leaders' high academic expectations. Pupils enjoy celebrating their achievements through the weekly assemblies, which their parents and carers are invited to. Leaders and staff motivate pupils to keep trying their best. Pupils are prepared well for the next stage of their education.

Leaders have thought carefully about how to help pupils develop the skills that they need to be successful outside of school. For example, leaders have created the Leesfield life skills programme which challenges pupils to master a range of age-appropriate skills each year. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about rising to these challenges.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders provide a high-quality education for pupils across the school. Subject leaders have identified the key knowledge that pupils should know and remember in each topic. This means that teachers know precisely what content pupils should be taught. Subject leaders have thought carefully about how to organise their curriculums so that pupils' knowledge builds in a logical order from the early years to Year 6.

In the main, teachers have a clear understanding of how pupils' learning links to what they have learned previously and what they will learn in the future. This means that teachers can design learning that builds effectively on what pupils already know and can do. This helps pupils to develop secure subject knowledge.

In many subjects, leaders have ensured that there are opportunities for pupils to revisit key knowledge often. Teachers routinely check on what pupils have learned so that they can identify and address misconceptions quickly. Teachers offer carefully targeted support to pupils who struggle with their learning. Pupils learn well in these subjects.

In a small number of foundation subjects, some teachers' checks do not give them an accurate understanding of how well pupils remember the key knowledge in the curriculum. Some teachers introduce new learning before pupils are ready. As a result, a few pupils develop gaps in their knowledge without their teachers knowing.

Leaders have taken steps to strengthen their phonics provision. Children begin the phonics programme at the start of the Reception Year. Teachers know exactly which sounds pupils should know and when they should learn them. Leaders have ensured that staff are suitably trained to deliver the phonics programme consistently well. Pupils' reading books closely match the sounds that they have learned. This helps them to become confident readers.

Pupils in all year groups read to adults regularly. They are encouraged to read with accuracy and fluency. Teachers quickly identify any pupils who are falling behind with their reading knowledge. They provide appropriate support so that these pupils can catch up quickly.

Leaders encourage pupils to develop a love of reading. For example, pupils can borrow a reading suitcase containing a selection of books for them to enjoy at home. Teachers also take their classes to the local library. These experiences help pupils to develop regular reading habits. Pupils told the inspector that they enjoy reading.

Leaders quickly identify the additional needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff support these pupils well. Teachers adapt the delivery of the curriculum appropriately so that pupils with SEND can learn well alongside their peers.

Most pupils behave exceptionally well. They are respectful to their teachers and to each other. Pupils are eager to participate in lessons. Learning is rarely disrupted. Children in the early years settle well into school routines.

Leaders provide a strong programme to support pupils' personal development. Through this programme, pupils learn a wealth of information that prepares them well for life in modern Britain. For example, they learn about equality and diversity.

Governors are highly committed to the school. Together with leaders, they are dedicated to ensuring that pupils receive a high-quality education. Staff are immensely proud of their school. They feel well supported by leaders, who are cognisant of staff's workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that staff and governors receive regular safeguarding training. As a result, staff are knowledgeable about their safeguarding responsibilities, and they know how to identify pupils who may be at risk of harm. Leaders know pupils well. They have built strong relationships with pupils' families, offering them support where appropriate. Leaders work with a range of external agencies to ensure that vulnerable pupils and their families access any specialist help that they require.

Leaders ensure that pupils are taught important information about how to keep themselves safe. For example, pupils learn about how to stay safe in a range of circumstances, including online and when riding their bikes.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few foundation subjects, some teachers do not carefully check how well pupils have learned the knowledge in the curriculum. This means that some pupils develop gaps in their learning without teachers knowing. Leaders should ensure that teachers are well equipped to check that pupils' prior knowledge is secure before moving on to new learning.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in January 2013.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	105714
Local authority	Oldham
Inspection number	10256211
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	203
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Rebecca Ashton
Headteacher	James Whittaker
Website	www.leesfield.oldham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	14 December 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is a Church of England school. The most recent section 48 inspection took place in April 2017.
- School leaders do not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection that the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector spoke with the headteacher, other leaders and staff.
- The inspector spoke with representatives of the local governing body, a representative of the local authority and a representative of the Diocese of Manchester.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- The inspector spoke to pupils about their experiences of school. The inspector also observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes.
- The inspector checked the school's safeguarding policies and procedures, including the school's single central record. The inspector met with leaders, staff and pupils to check how effective safeguarding is in the school.
- The inspector reviewed a wide range of evidence, including the school's self-evaluation documents and records of governing body minutes.
- The inspector considered the responses shared through Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. The inspector also considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff. There were no responses to the online survey for pupils.

Inspection team

Sally Rix, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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